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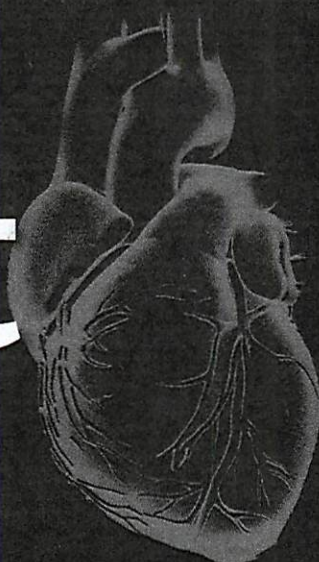
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Protect Your Heart



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EXCLUSIVE

Ratings of heart surgeons

\$5.99US



State by state, how well do heart surgeons perform?

These ratings allow you to compare surgical groups that perform heart bypass surgery based on overall performance, complications, and other quality measures. The data are for July 1, 2009, to July 30, 2010, and come from the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS), which gathers information from more than 90 percent of the roughly 1,100 surgical groups in the U.S. that perform cardiac surgery. While not all groups let us publish their results, this year 324 did, compared with just 221 last year. On the measure of overall performance, shown on these and the following three pages, 81 groups were above the national average (three stars), 238 were average (two stars), and five were below average (one star).

The willingness of surgeons to track their performance has led to some important improvements, including a dramatic reduction in mortality. For example, the difference between the group with the highest chance of patient survival (98.8 percent) and the lowest (96.9 percent) is so small that it's practically indistinguishable. As a result, all of the groups rated here were average for survival. "That doesn't mean that average isn't very good," says Frederick L. Grover, M.D., chairman of the department of surgery at the University of Colorado School of Medicine in Aurora and an organizer of the STS National Database. "It means everyone is doing an excellent job at preventing patient deaths."

However, the groups did vary in their ability to avoid complications. Groups that had more or fewer complications than the national average are footnoted.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Check whether the surgical group you're considering is in our ratings. If it's not, ask whether it reports to the STS (most do) and, if so, ask about its results. Groups not involved with the STS might report to state-run databases, so ask about those, too. And if a surgical group can't—or won't—share that information? "Keep looking," Grover advises.

Find out, too, about the medications you should receive before and after surgery, such as aspirin to reduce the risk of blood clots and heart attacks, a statin to lower cholesterol, and a beta-blocker to prevent abnormal heart rhythms and lower blood pressure. Also take steps to reduce the risk of complications. For example, stopping smoking and controlling asthma before surgery might reduce your risk of needing prolonged ventilation.

More detailed information on the surgical groups listed here is available online to subscribers of ConsumerReportsHealth.org. Click on the Doctors & Hospitals tab.

Ratings Heart surgery groups

Group name, city	Hospital	Overall rating
ALABAMA ★★		
Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery at Providence Hospital, Mobile	Providence Hospital	
East Alabama Cardiac and Thoracic Surgery, PC, Opelika	East Alabama Medical Center	
ARIZONA ★★		
Heart and Vascular Center of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff	Flagstaff Medical Center	
Scottsdale Healthcare, Scottsdale	Scottsdale Healthcare OSBORN	
Scottsdale Healthcare, Scottsdale	Scottsdale Healthcare - SHEA	
Yuma Cardiac Surgery, Yuma	Yuma Regional Medical Center	
ARKANSAS ★★		
Cardiology Associates of Northeast Arkansas, Jonesboro	St. Bernards Medical Center	
CALIFORNIA ★★★		
Dept of CV Surgery at Kaiser Permanente Santa Clara Medical Center, Santa Clara	Santa Clara Medical Center	
East Bay Cardiac Surgery Center Medical Group, Oakland	Alta Bates Summit Medical Center	
Orange County Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgeons, Orange	St. Jude Medical Center	
Orange County Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgeons, Orange	Saint Joseph Hospital	
★★		
Adamson & Dembitsky Medical Corporation, San Diego	Sharp Memorial Hospital	
Advanced Cardiothoracic Surgery Medical Group, Inc., Los Angeles	Good Samaritan Hospital	
California Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgeons, Ventura	Community Memorial Hospital	
Dr. Vial and Surgeons, Burlingame	Mills-Peninsula Health Services	
East Bay Cardiovascular and Thoracic Associates, San Ramon	San Ramon Regional Medical Center	
East Bay Cardiovascular and Thoracic Associates John Muir Health, Concord	John Muir Medical Center	
Eduardo A. Tovar, M.D., Whittier	Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital	
Glendale Adventist Medical Center, Glendale	Glendale Adventist Medical Center	

① Fewer complications than average. ② More complications than average.

★★★ Above average ★★ Average ★ Below average		
Group name, city	Hospital	Overall rating
<i>California continued</i> ★★		
Joachim M. Postel, MD, PhD, Eureka	St. Joseph Hospital	
Long Beach Memorial Medical Center, Long Beach	Long Beach Memorial Medical Center	
Pacific Coast Cardiac and Vascular Surgeons, San Francisco	California Pacific Medical Center	
Pomona Valley Cardiac Surgery Medical Group, Pomona	Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center	
Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center, Torrance	Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center	
Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center, Burbank ②	Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center	
Providence Tarzana Medical Center, Tarzana	Providence Tarzana Medical Center	
Raney Zusman Medical Group, Newport Beach	Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian	
Redding Cardiac and Vascular Surgery Medical Corp., Redding	Mercy Medical Center Redding	
Saddleback Memorial Medical Center, Laguna Hills	Saddleback Memorial Medical Center	
Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital, Santa Rosa	Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital	
Sharp Chula Vista Medical Center, Chula Vista	Sharp Chula Vista Medical Center	
Sharp Grossmont Hospital, La Mesa	Sharp Grossmont Hospital	
Stanford Cardiac Surgery Program at Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital, Salinas	Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System	
Stanford Cardiothoracic Surgeons, Stanford	Stanford Hospitals and Clinics	
Tri-City Medical Center, Oceanside	Tri-City Medical Center	
UC Davis Medical Center Cardiothoracic Surgery, Sacramento	University of California, Davis Medical Center	
UCLA Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, Los Angeles	Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center	
Washington Hospital Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery, Fremont ①	Washington Hospital Healthcare System	
COLORADO ★★★		
Front Range Cardiac, Thoracic & Vascular Surgery, P.C., Denver	Exempla Saint Joseph Hospital	
Penrose Cardiothoracic Surgery, Colorado Springs	Penrose-St. Francis Health Services	
★★		
Boulder Valley Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery, Niwot	Longmont United Hospital	
Boulder Valley Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery, Niwot	Boulder Community Hospital	
Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery at St. Mary's Hospital, Grand Junction	St. Mary's Hospital and Medical Center	
CardioVascular Institute of North Colorado-Cardiac, Thoracic and Vascular Surgery, Greeley	North Colorado Medical Center	